'Gunsmoke'--Rescue for downed choppers

By PFC William Hutchison

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – "Gunsmoke REcovery. This is Chu Lai Control. There is a bird down."

With these words the men of "Gunsmoke Recovery" spring into action. Captain David Sebright, (Hopkins, Mich.), and First Lieutenant John Swartzel, (Waynesville, Ohio) dash to their UH-1H Huey "slick" and start cranking up. The gunners and four riggers, all Pathfinder trained, gather any special gear they will need and clamber aboard. Sixty seconds after they get the call, the chopper is on its way.

"Gunsmoke Recovery" team rig up this LOH (Light Observation Helicopter) to be transported back ot Chu Lai for repair. (U.S. Army Photo)

Speed is essential. As Sergeant Mark Johnson, (St. Louis) stated: "When a bird goes down, Charlie knows its down, so it's a race for you to get to the bird before he does."

If it is a Huey type craft that is down, Sebright sets his bird down and drops off his four Pathfinders. It is their job to rig the downed ship and prepare it for a CH-47 "Chinook" that is dispatched to pick up the copter and take it to Chu Lai for repair or salvage.

It takes the Pathfinders only two to three minutes to rig an intact Huey. For a "Chinook" it usually takes 10 minutes to ready the big bird for pick-up by a CH-54 "Skycrane."

An OH-6A "LOH", which is rigged by only one man, takes three to four minutes with the help of someone from ground secutity. Which as Private First Class William "Ralph" Sexton, (Olympia, Wash.), stated: "Usually ends up being the Lieutenant or platoon sergeant.

Wrecked aircraft take longer to rig depending on the damage they have sustained.

Since their formation on the 26th of December 1970 "Gunsmoke Recovery" has recovered 180 downed "Americal" copters. They are the only division size recovery unit in Vietnam. They have copied much of their operation from "Pipesmoke Recovery", who operates in the South on a corps level.

"Pipesmoke Recovery" knows as much or more about rigging as anyone in the world," said Johnson.

The Pathfinders are from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 14th Aviation Battalion. They are airborme qualified and have completed a five-week special training program at Fort Benning, Georgia. There they learned aircraft rigging techniques, how to set up landing zones and direct aircraft, plus additional parachute training.

But as Swartzel stated' "Most of what the Pathfinders know, they learned—OJT (on-the-job training) out there."

The men recall vividly their first mission. They were in the ready room preparing to close up for the night. Corporal William Lundy, (Oconee, Ga.), commented: "What do we do if we get a night mission, sir?"

"I can't think of any reason why we should have a night mission," replied Swartzel. No sooner had the words left his mouth than "Gunsmoke Recovery" was notified that they, indeed, had a night mission.

When the recovery "slick" reached the coordinates of the downed bird they found nothing—none of the promised gunships, flare ships, or ground security. While they patiently circled about, an infantry company located the downed copter 10 miles away.

With the flare ships providing illumination, AH-1G "Cobra gunships" giving air support and an infantry company for security, the "Gunsmoke" chopper came in and deposited the nervous riggers.

Fifteen minutes later, the downed craft was ready to be lifted out and the Pathfinders, "virgins" no more, were equally ready to get out.

With two birds on stand-by at all times the men of "Gunsmoke Recovery" have retrieved as many as five downed choppers in one day and they all occurred after 1700 hours.

The Pathfinders and the pilots even though they have had no training or experience in the recovery of downed aircraft, have not lost one craft.

As Swartzel stated: "It is our responsibility to rig these birds up right and see there are no problems getting them back to Chu Lai."

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 4 No. 22 Chu Lai, Vietnam June 4, 1971

Second largest ever

Drug raid valued at $30 million

By Sp/4 Fred Abatemarco

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Using information received from a former drug user and a subsequent investigation, the Criminal Investingation Division (CID) of the 23rd Infantry Division recently conducted a drug raid in Duc Pho which resulted in a siezure of narcotics said to be valued at approximately $30 million.

The joint narcotics squad, which consists of a field force of National Police, Military Police investingators and provincial police, arrested a Vietnamese female believed to be participating in the operation of the primary narcotics source in Quang Ngai Province. One Vietnamese male suspected of being a drug pusher was on the premises at the time of the raid and was also arrested.

The cache is the second largest ever siezed by authorities in the Republic of Vietnam. Seventeen pounds of heroin and 20 kilos of marijuana were confiscated along with assorted quantities of opium, morphine, benoctol and immonoctol. A total of 1,650,000 piastres were also siezed, suspected of being the profits of drug sales.

The establishment had been under suspicion of drug trafficing for a number of weeks, but it wasn't until the cooperation of a former drug user was solicited by the CID that the necessary search warrents could be acquired. A sketch of the location was provided along with particulars concerning the type of operation. Within three days the strike force of local and military police were able to proceed with the apprehension and siezure.

Hide, seek cache

By PFC Larry Rich

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde IO) – Often the war takes on the appearance of a deadly game of hide and seek in the mountains and jungles of the Republic of South Vietnam. This was recently demonstrated by the men of the 1st and 3rd Platoons of Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, as they unearthed enemy caches.

While searching for a place to set up their Night Defensive Position (NDP), in the mountains south of Da Nang, members of the 1st Platoon came upon an abandoned enemy base camp. A check of the buildings showed they had long been vacant, but the men of the "Black Death Company", continued their search in the rocky caves which bordered the area.

Entering the caves cautiously, the soldiers returned triumphant. They had found an AK-50 wrapped in a NVA poncho, 250 rounds of AK ammunition, two cans of enemy documents, two NVA radio head sets, and 50 pounds of salt stored in two gallon plastic containers.

Also found was a home-made 60mm mortar tube. Noticing a 60mm mortar base plate partially buried in the ground, the infantrymen carefully dug it out. A check of the hole revealed a 250 pound bomb buried underneath the base plate.

Combing through the scattered rocks proved fruitful for the men of the "Killer Platoon." The area showed the effects on an artillery barrage, and amid the shattered rocks and shell holes laid uncovered enemy weapons.

The soldiers soon gathered up an 82mm mortar base plate, two Chicom (Chinese Communist) had grenades, several magazines and 34 automatic and bolt operated weapons.

After the caches were transported to the rear in accordance with Army directives, the men of Delta Company continued to search for NVA supplies. They moved cautiously, knowing that the enemy might have hidden booby trapped explosives for the seekers to find.

Crime Doesn't Pay

Private First Class Gregory A. Carlos, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 198th Infantry Brigade, was apprehended on 13 February 1971 near the Chu Lai perimeter and charged with the unlawful possession of 18 vials of heroin. Contrary to his plea of not guilty, he was convicted by special court-martial on 16 April 1971 of unlawful possession of heroin in violation of Article 134, UCMJ. Following his conviction, he was sentenced to reduction to the lowest enlisted grade, forfeiture of $50,00 per month for five months, confinement as hard labor for four months and to be discharged with a bad conduct discharge.

Project Help Question of the Week
Question: My wife is going to file for divorce and I need a compassionate leave. Can I get one?
Answer: Under the soldiers and sailors relief act, your wife may file only with your consent. Upon presentation of documentary evidence that your situation can be corrected you may submit to Personnel Actions your request for a compassionate leave.

Chu Lai USO program director, Miss Donna Swope, (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), is shown here with the winner of the "Home to Mom" raffle, Specialist Four James L. Arnold, (Oxford, Ala.). Arnold not only will get the chance to see his mother, but also his wife and newborn son. (Story on Page 2)

Relaxation comes in the form of reading and just plain sleeping for these infantrymen of Charlie Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf. (U.S. Army Photo by 1LT Warren C. Mabie)

'No mail'

Write to 'MOM' she'll answer you

By Sp/4 Thomas F. Boehler

CHU LAI (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Feeling lonely? Does the mail clerk look the other way when you approach? Maybe your girl has stopped writting. It's the wrong time of year for Christmas cards or Valentines. Does the main situation look hopeless? Try writing Mom–she'll guarantee an answer and do her best to cheer you up.

"Mom" is really Mrs. Elsie J. Vermuele, but she has become a second Mom to over 800 servicemen and women around the world, including several in the 198th Infantry Brigade. She lives at R. R. No. 1, Hancock, Iowa, 51536, and has a family of 10 children two of whom are in the Army in Germany.

Mom got the idea of writing to people in the service when her son went into the Army and she has been writing for over four years. She has put ads in different newspapers asking for addresses of people to write to.

"To me each one of the boys is like a son," says Mom. "I try to write like they are all part of our family. I feel even the ones that are of different nations and other races are the same, as they all have feelings of homesickness and of being lonesome."

Not all of the letters that Mom writes get answered, but when they do Mom takes a break at writing to new people in order to answer them.

"I can't tell you what the feeling is every time I get a letter from one of them," she says. "That is something that unless you feel it, you just have no idea what it is like."

"I don't feel that what I am doing is so great; I'm only trying to do what God has set for me to do. This is the only way I know of doing my part."

Mom loves all little children and can't stand to see them mistreated. She is studying practical nursing and hopes to get her diploma soon. Once she took in four little girls and cared for them for five months.

"I didn't get any money for taking care of them," she said, "but the girls were clean and healthy and happy. They were dirty and sick when I took them in, and they made me think of the little ones over there in Vietnam. I have always had the desire to have an orphanage some day. I know I never will, but I can dream."

Mom tells the people she writes to that if they are ever blue it really helps to sit down and write to someone. She tells them if others are feeling down they should write her a letter and she will answer it.

"Try it yourself sometime," she says. "It's better than writing to your own family and getting them all upset. People tell me that they feel better after they have written and it makes me feel better too.

"I would still like to have more addresses and I hope that as my letters go on they will be shared and others will write."

Free trip home

By Cpt. George F. Bennett

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) -- Would you believe Christmas day was changed to May 8th? Just ask Specialist Four James L. Arnold (Oxford, Ala.), and you may agree.

The day started as any other for Arnold as he performed his job with the 196th Infantry Brigade. He is assigned as a head generator repairman with 1st Platoon, Company B, 523rd Signal Battalion.

Then the word came. He was to report to the brigade adjutant. "I was told I was to go up for soldier of the month," said Arnold.

As he was ushered into Captain Werner Chamberlain's (Columbus, Ga.), office his expression quickly became serious. The reading of his rights caused his jaw to drop slightly.

Then came the charge. "You are charged with buying a dollar chance from the USO and winning a trip for 14 day's leave," said the adjutant.

There it was–Christmas, New Years, Thanksgiving, and all good days rolled into one. Arnold's smile was from ear to ear when Miss Donna Swope (Thousand Oaks, Calif.), program director for the Chu Lai USO gave the offical congratulations.

Miss Swope came upon the idea of the raffle when she was trying to develop a Mother's Day program. "I thought, wouldn't it be neat to send a guy home," she said.

Arnold actually will miss Mother's Day. The soonest flight to Dallas Texas, the closest airport to his home is on May 12th.

But he doesn't mind. He's going home not only to see his wife and mother but also for the first glimpse of his new son. Jeffery Scott Arnold was born on May 3rd.

"The day after I was told about my son by the Red Cross, I entered the contest," said Arnold. "I didn't think I had much chance since I bought only one ticket. There were guys buying as many as 10."

May 8th was definitely a great day for Specialist Arnold. It can be amply summarized by First Lieutenant James R. Brannon (Mooresville, N.C.), his platoon leader, when he said, "You lucky son of a gun."

Memorial for 11th Bde Chaplain

By PFC William Hutchison

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Memorial services were held recently in the 23rd Infantry Division chapel for Chaplain (CPT) Merle D. Brown 11th Inf. Bde., who was killed in action on Easter Sunday, the 11th of April 1971.

The services were attended by Major General James L. Baldwin, Commanding General of the 23rd Infantry Division, members of his staff, and the Division chaplains.

On Easter Sunday Chaplain Brown lost his life as a result of enemy action. The chaplain had just finished church services for one of the companies of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade.

"He truly died in the service of God and his fellowman," stated Division Chaplain (LTC) Ira G. Moss.

Chaplain Brown was born on 1 October 1938 in Butler, Pennsylvania. He was educated at Capitol University and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. He received his commission as a chaplain and entered the U.S. Army on the 14th of May, 1968.

Prior to coming the Republic of Vietnam, Brown served at Walson Army Hospital, Fort Dix, New Jersey. In a letter he wrote just after he received his orders for Vietnam, Chaplain Brown expressed: "a tremendous joy over being able to serve the men in Vietnam."

He had been in Vietnam with the 11th Infantry Brigade since August of 1970.

Chaplain Brown is survived by his wife, Betty, who resides in Columbus, Ohio and three children, Timothy, age 7; Melissa, age 5; and Kristel, age 2.

The chaplains attending the memorial service were addressed by Chaplain (COL) John W. Betzold, Command Chaplain for MACV and Chaplain (COL) Leonard F. Stegman, Staff Chaplain USARV. The benediction was delievered by Chaplain (MAJ) Edwin A. Roloson of the 14th CAB.

After the services in the chapel the chaplains dedicated a stone monument and plaque to the memory of Americal chaplains who have lain down their lives in the Republic of Vietnam.

The monument will be permanently located in the front of the Division chapel.

The plaque was inscribed: "In memory of Americal Chaplains Killed in Action. Servants of God and Man. They await the resurrection with the men for whom they died."

Cannoneers motto: 'You yell, we shell'

LZ FAT CITY (23rd Inf. Div. Arty IO) – Have you ever noticed the soldier in the USO advertisements with the lonely look on his face as he dutifully watches the near-by rice paddies for some sight of possible enemy activity. That picture could have very easily been taken of a guard on the Fat City perimeter.

Even though LZ Fat City is only a few minutes by chopper and less than ten miles by QL 1 from Chu Lai, at night it seems as if it is the "Last Outpost." Adding to the austerity of the landscape surrounding Fat City, the famed "Rocket Pocket" looms dismally in the night to remind the men of C Battery, 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery that Charlie is less than 5 clicks away.

Quiet as the surrounding rice paddies may be, there is little sleep to be gotten by the C Battery cannoneers. Counter rocket fire for the Chu Lai Defense Command can be counted on 360 nights of the year as upwards of 400 rounds a night are aimed at the "Rocket Pocket." Every night Charlie feels the iron gauntlet of artillery swatting at his backside as the Fat City M-102's fire support missions for elements of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry and local PF patrols.

No matter the time, day or night, C Battery is always ready to live up to its motto, "You Yell, We Shell."

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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Specialist Four Darrell L. McGillen . . . . . Editor

An infantryman of Charlie Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf., rests wearily upon his ruck sack during a break in the action of a recent operation in the Ky Tra Valley. (U.S. Army Photo by 1LT Warren C. Mabie)

Imposter salutes 1st Sgt discloses fake identity

By PFC Arnold S. Egan

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – What does a man do when his brother, who's in the Army plans on going AWOL? Wesley Storer (Yarmouth, Maine), was confronted with that problem and he thought he had the solution. It was really quite simple, he would take his brother's place.

Even though Wesley was classified 4F, because of a skiing accident, he was ready to give his services for his younger brother, Specialist Four Glen R. Storer. After all, he knew going AWOL was bad business and he thought he could fill in to keep his brother out of trouble.

Of course the guise failed once Wesley arrived at his brother's unit, Reconnaissance Platoon, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade at LZ Hawk Hill.

Without his sideburns and with his hair cut the older Storer was able to closely resemble his brother. He even went to considerable effort in memorizing procedures, the phoetic alphabet, and some of the colloquial phrases the Army uses.

By looking at pictures of the younger Storer's friends and through much quizzing and requizzing, Wesley felt confident enough to start the trip to the Republic of Vietnam.

The trip from California to Tan Son Nhut AFB in Saigon was uneventful, because Wesley was able to evade direct confrontation with other Army personnel. He had passed the first test and began to grown even more confident in his ability to complete the masquerade.

His confidence wasn't dimmed when he arrived at Chu Lai for further movement to the battalion's rear area. He thought the disguise might just work.

But it didn't. Once at Hawk Hill, Wesley quickly became entangled in tight web. "It was the little things which made me believe this man was not Glen Storer," said one of the platoon members. For instance, he didn't know what PFC or Spec Four meant. He asked what the birds and flowers on the collars meant."

"Yeah," said another man. "He even saluted the First Sergeant."

"The real soldier always had a deck of cards with him, but this man didn't. Glen ate like a horse, but this man asked for a single sandwich," said a third platoon member.

Wearing his camouflage jungle fatigues and "bush hat", Wesley Storer was marched to the Adjutant of the 2nd of the 1st, Captain Francis G. Downey (Los Angeles) where he was questioned. Realizing his attempt to cover for his brother had failed, he quickly confessed.

"Well sir, I'm his brother," said Wesley. "I knew Glen was going AWOL and I didn't want him to get into trouble so I took his place. I'd do anything for my brother, sir, anything. I was going to take his place over here until the tour was over and then he would finish up in the states."

The Military Police were informed and took custody of the older brother. He was then transported to higher authorities to return to the United States.

An infantryman of Charlie Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf., pauses for a little refreshment during a recent operation in the Ky Tra Valley. (U.S. Army Photo by 1LT Warren C. Mabie)

Vietnam Artist

Escapes boredom

By Sgt. Tom Mano

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Using the side of a wooden crate instead of canvas and out-up soap dishes in place of palette knives, a soldier here has brought the fine arts to the 196th Infantry Brigade.

Private First Class Daniel L. Del Rio (San Francisco) labored from midnight until sunrise for four night to finish his painting.

"I work better at night, because it's so still," said the painter. "I'm just lucky that my job (radio-telephone operator at Brigade S-3) enables me to get off at midnight."

The four foot by four foot palette (dabbing on paint instead of brushing) painting is a collection of faces mirroring various expressions. Rich yellow blur with splashes of black giving a three dimension effect to the white background.

"This painting reflects the crowded conditions in the cities, a kind of murder," said Del Rio. "That's why so many of the faces are sad or confused "

When Del Rio was 15, he started to study painting on an informal basis. During high school he participated in art classes, but said he wasn't really influenced by these subjects.

"At 18, I was a beach bum and needed extra money, so I sold a couple of works," reflected Del Rio, "I sold two for $100 each and one for $150."

His latest work wasn't inspired by a sudden revelation or an impetuous thought as many paintings are. The creativity was spurred on by a trait common to many soldiers in the rear.

"I was just trying to escape boredom–complete, monotonous boredom," said the artist. "It was just something to do."

The artist says he's going to take his painting to America to keep until he needs some money. But this will not be his last creation in Vietnam.

"This one has given me momentary self-satisfaction," said Del Rio. "The next one will probably be a nude study, six feet tall and two feet wide, or a GI scene. They seem to be the two most relative subjects over here."

When he leaves the Army in August, Del Rio may carry a bit of the military with him. This was evident when he said, "My primary MOS (Military Occupational Speciality) is painting, my secondary MOS is sculpture and my third MOS is photography."

Private First Class Daniel L. Del Rio (San Francisco) puts the finishing touches on his painting reflecting population explosion. (U.S. Army Photo by Sp/5 Robert A. Spangler)

Telephone call from Charlie

By Sp/4 Thomas F. Boehler

LZ STINSON (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Answering a telephone is usually no big thing but when an infantryman from the 23rd Infantry Division's 198th Infantry Brigade heard an NVA telephone ring in the middle of the jungle he had to be a bit surprised.

An element from Delta Company, 1st Battalion 52nd Infantry, had entered what they thought was an empty NVA base camp in an area southwest of Chu Lai. They were investigating their surroundings when they heard the Chinese made field telephone ring.

"I was in what was probably the enemy's command station and had noticed the telephone tied to a post," said Sergeant Loyd Gobby (Somerset, Ky.), a squad leader. "I was sure surprised when it started ringing. We thought the place was empty."

Knowing that the enemy often leaves clever boobytraps behind, the "Ready Rifles" were hesitant to answer the call. But after carefully searching for anything that looked out of place, Gobby decided the only thing to do was to find out who was calling.

"I knew that I would be talking to an enemy soldier but I didn't know what else to do, so I picked up the phone and said 'Hello' into the receiver," said Gobby. "There was one of the enemy on the other end as I had expected. He mumbled something that I couldn't understand for a few moments, and then I took my knife and cut the telephone from the wall."

The "Ready Rifles" continued on their mission and Gobby got an unusual souvenir and an unforgettable experience.

GI escapes faulty trap

By Sp/4 Thomas F. Boehler

CHU LAI (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – An infantryman from the 23rd Infantry Division's 198th Infantry Brigade, on his first mission in the field received some on-the-job training in Viet Cong booby-traps detection. He got a close look at his first real booby-trap shortly after he tripped it and it failed to go off, on a recent mission northwest of Chu Lai.

An element from Alpha Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, was moving to a new laager position on top of a steep hill and Private First Class Timothy Steinmeier (Arcadia, Calif.), a rifleman, was walking sixth in line. As the "Professionals" neared the top of the hill, his foot struck the firing device of an enemy booby-trap.

"I heard a pop and saw some white powder fly into the air," said Steinmeier. "I wasn't scared or anything because I didn't know what had happened. That was my first mission in the field."

Two of the more experienced members of the platoon told Steinmeier not to move any farther, then moved cautiously forward to see what had happened. After the infantrymen got to where Steinmeier was sitting, they knelt down and carefully dug up the booby-trap.

"I found a safe spot and took off my rucksack and sat on it," said Steinmeier. "I really began to worry when I saw what they found. I didn't know what it was until then."

The booby-trap consisted of a large artillery round buried in the ground with a pressure-type firing device on top. It was situated near a small hole on the side of the hill.

"I was walking about ten meters behind Steinmeier when he hit it," said Private First Class Steve Lowry (San Rafael, Calif.), a rifleman. "Even though we were well spread out, if that artillery round had gone off quite a few people could have been hurt. We were really lucky."

Doctor visits son in three day get-together in Saigon

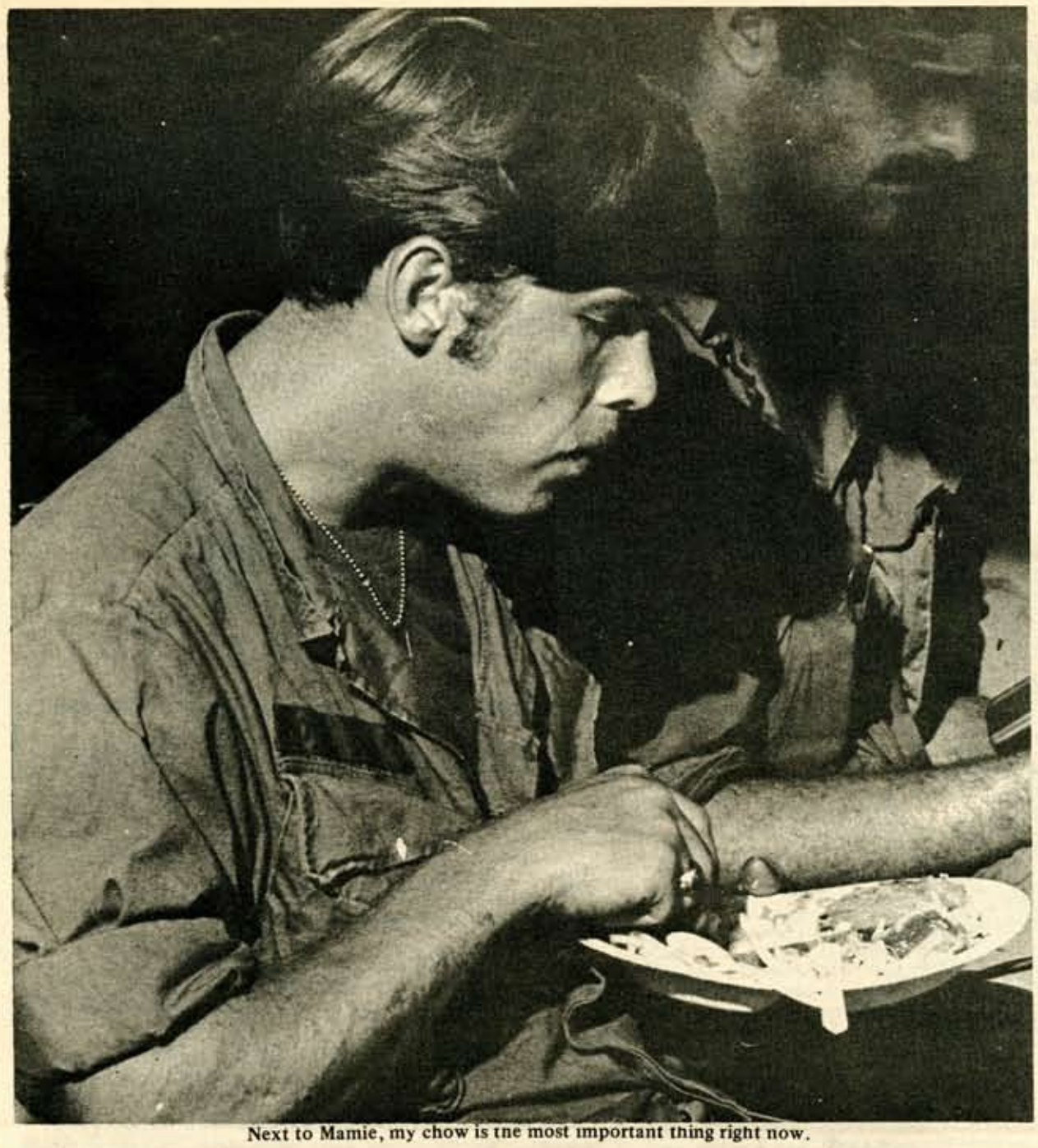
FSB BRONCO (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – "It's not the sort of thing you would expect to happen," said Specialist Four Hanford L. Auten, III. Friends agreed when the 11th Infantry Brigade trooper's father visited him at FSB Bronco recently.

Doctor Hanford L. Auten managed to get away from a busy medical practice in Claremont, N.H. to visit his son, a legal clerk in the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry. Dr. Auten is a retired Colonel with 28 years of service in the Air Force Reserve.

"I knew he was coming," said Auten, "because he told me he would try once I got over here.

War zones are not new to Auten's father; in fact, he spent active duty time as a B-29 squadron surgeon and flew enough missions to earn an Air Medal in World War II.

The Autens spent three days in Saigon before the doctor had to return to his practice in New Hampshire. One thing that Auten's father said impressed him, that was the friendliness and helpfulness of all the servicemen he met in Vietnam.



Next to Mamie, my chow is the most important thing right now.

Miss Van Doren personally makes sure one of I

Miss Van Doren highlights infantryme

Front row seats are the best seats in the house. CHECK IT OUT!

lta Company's men's morale is sky high.

If you like what you see-----STARE

en's standdown

LZ BRONCO, (11th Inf. Bde. IO) -- One of the many things the standdown troops look forward to when they come in from the field is live entertainment. The men of Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry were recently treated to the pleasure of Miss Mamie Van Doren's floor show during their standdown on FSB Bronco.

When Miss Van Doren was on stage the men of Delta Company responded to here act enthusiastically. Sometimes the men could do nothing but stare, with their mouths wide open, as Miss Van Doren went through her act. Obviously they hadn't seen anything like here act out in the field.

At the end of her show screams, shouts and whistles filled the standdown stage area. Delta Company definitely didn't want Miss Van Doren to leave--they wanted more.

Delta Company is back out in the field now, but you can bet there are still a lot of stories being told about the day Mamie Van Doren played for standdown.

Photos and Story

By

CPT John Hollingsworth

Miss Van Doren's show had adequate photo coverage when she played for Delta Company.

Da Nang, new HQ for 196th Bde.

By Cpt. George F. Bennett

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – When it comes to moving, people have mixed emotions. Some revel in the sense of adventure and opportunities to see and do new things. Others gasp at the considerable amount of sweat, toil, and effort involved in resettling. There are even the few who drown in memories left behind and of a fear of the unknown.

All of these emotions were quite evident when the 196th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division made the jump from LZ Hawk Hill to Da Nang.

Though the task was massive, and at times seemed impossible, it was made with relative ease. The manuever elements probably relocated with the least amount of effort. When you're a "grunt" and carry your "worldly possessions" in a 90-pound rucksack, all you have to do is travel.

The support personnel, however, hassled their way from LZ Hawk Hill to Da Nang in leap-frog fashion. And to a degree it was a hassle. Sections were forced to split in order to function in two seperate locations. The field soldiers in both areas of operation had to have the necessary support. There was no way a section could just close up shop, move, and the reopen for business.

Of course there were problems. There always are, when a family or a unit makes a move. During the actual movement tensions were high and tempers on edge. Still after a hot shower and cold beer it didn't seem so bad.

Much of the credit for the successful deployment can be attributed to the clerks, drivers, and supply personnel. They young professionals, draftees and the "old pross" fused into a well-oiled machine.

First Sergeant Robert H. Loving (Tacoma, Wash.), first sergeant, Headquarters Company, 196th Inf. Bde., was one of the main cogs in the wheels of the movement.

His experience speaks for itself. He has moved his family eight times during his 19-year Army career. He was also instrumental in four unit moves in the Republic of Vietnam.

"Moving a company is quite similar to moving a family," said Loving. "Each time you move you find you've acquired a lot of unnecessary equipment. You must be constantly checking to get rid of the functionless property.

"When I was alerted for the move, I had to know what I was going to do," continued the first sergeant. "To keep all sections operating, I had to split my forces down the middle so we could operate in two places. Maintaining proper control was my biggest problem."

As the company and the brigade take over from the Marines, the conversions seem extremely smooth. "I've received outstanding cooperation as we've assumed the missions from the Marines," stated Loving. "It couldn't go any better."

Loving is extremely proud of the men who performed the actual move. Frequently, the trucks were loaded in the morning at LZ Hawk Hill and driven to Da Nang where they were unloaded for immediate return to Hawk Hill. Until the move was completed, it was an endless cycle between the two sites. "What really surprised me was that we didn't have one unit vehicle break down on the road," concluded Loving.

It's a good bet the men of the 196th would rather take the place of the Marines for the trip home. However, they can feel a sense of pride as they replace them in Da Nang. They are now one move closer to home.

Handicaped scout dog proves his unique abilities

By Sgt. Thomas R. Mano

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – What has four legs, one eye and can smell a wire you can't even see? No, it's not a cyclops who thinks he's a chair. Give up?

"Duke" is the answer. He's 68 pounds of fur that nobody would like to tangle with, especially the NVA and VC.

Private First Class James L. Palmer (Scottsdale, Ariz.), handler for the german shepherd, doesn't seem to mind him, nor do the men in the 196th Infantry Brigade that he works for. "When the men first see that Duke only has one eye, they're a bit skeptical," said Palmer. "But after he performs, they love him."

Duke and Palmer started their relationship when the handler was in Bien Hoa. "I was walking around the kennels when I saw him and we immediately became friends," continued Palmer. "The men there weren't sure Duke could work in the thick triple-canopy jungle. I wanted to give him a chance, so they wouldn't put him to sleep."

Duke had performed well in the 4th Division, but could he work well in the more thickly-vegetated terrain of Military Region I? Palmer had faith and set out to prove it.

Four days after they arrived at the 48th Scout Dog Platoon, the team was sent out with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry. The mission turned out to be more of a mutual education than a test.

After seven days of rest, the team was on the move again, this time to aid infantrymen in finding booby-traps. The first explosive Duke found was a mortar round.

"It made me feel good that he could find something underground," reflected Palmer. "He's not trained to find anything buried; that's a mine dog's job."

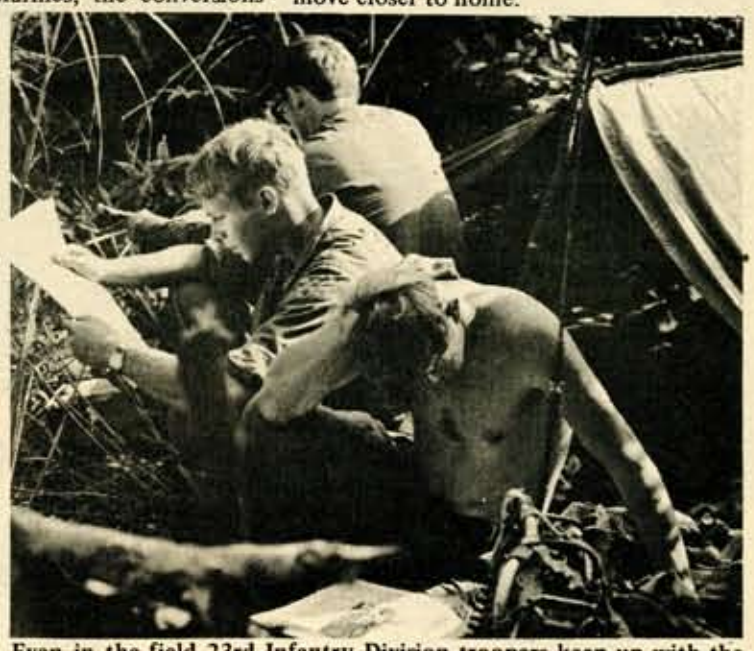
Duke's spectacular "nosejob" was followed by an assignment to rid the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry of some snipers. The infantrymen were being held down on a hill and Duke's job was to help them get off, quickly.

Duke's first find came as soon as he stepped off the hill. The men shot up the bushes in the direction of Duke's alert and found a blood trail.

But this was only a start. During the mission Duke broke up four ambushes with his sensitive nose. "We knew men were there because the plastic they were sitting on was still warm," said Palmer.

One outstanding trait Duke exhibited was the distance from the enemy at which he alerted. He was catching the scent from 30 to 50 meters.

Duke has now proven himself in the 196th Inf. Bde. He is repected by the "friendlies" as well as the enemy. He'll never be in want of a job.



Even in the field 23rd Infantry Division troopers keep up with the news. Here members of Delta Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., utilize a rest period to read the Stars and Stripes. (U.S. Army Photo by Sp/4 John Cushman)

LOH crew on routine VR, net three

By Sgt Thomas R. Mano

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Div. IO) – It was a routine evening VR (visual reconnaissance) mission for the members of a 196th Infantry Brigade LOH (light observation helicopter). Routine, until they rounded a bend in a river.

Afterwards there was deep content in the minds of Warrant Officer One Donald L. Delaplaine (Bayville, N.Y.), the pilot of Charger LOH OO and his crew chief-door gunner, Specialist Four Charles W. Cook (Indianola, Iowa) as they navigated through the twilight back to LZ Hawk Hill. Three enemy kills and three sampans destroyed had been a good day's work.

The action started as Delaplaine maneuvered along a white sandy river bank northwest of LZ Siberia. Their first sighting of the enemy is etched in Cook's mind.

"It was just like they popped up," recalled the door gunner. "There were three sampans and numerous men loading them."

As the tiny chopper swooped down for a closer look, it received AK-47 rifle fire. Cook returned fire with his M-60 machinegun and was able to kill two.

After its first run, Delaplaine reversed the LOH and fire started coming in from three locations. Making their second pass, Cook scouted the sagebrush, spotted an enemy and got his third kill for the day.

The LOH quickly ascended the 1500 feet and traveled in circles at approximately 120 knots. Cook continued to lay down suppressive fire, while Delaplaine adjusted artillery on the enemy's position. From time to time the crew-chief took potshots at the sampans, though with the LOH's fast speed he didn't expect to hit anything.

"I must've just hit one boat with a couple of rounds," recalled Cook. "It took five minutes to sink in the 25 feet of water."

The remaining two sampans were destroyed by artillery and as darkness set in Delaplaine decided to call it a day. As the LOH winged its way home, illumination rounds were shot from the firebases to guide it in.

On the surface, Delaplaine and Cook were instrumental in killing at least three enemy and destroying three sampans loaded with supplies, but vicariously they had plucked a thorn from the infantryman's side.

A look at 198th's aviation

By Sp/4 Thomas F. Boehler

CHU LAI, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – "Our section works strictly for the men on the ground," says Captain Thomas L. Pearcy Sr. (Dalleville, Ala.), in describing the 198th Brigade Aviation Section.

Primary mission of the aviation section is to provide direct support to field troops of the 198th Brigade. To accomplish this mission, the section has five light observation helicopters (LOH), which spend an average of 80 to 100 hours a week flying missions.

The section utilizes two LOHs to fly regularly scheduled missions, consisting primarily of visual reconnaissance and command and control flights for the brigade commanders.

"In addition to our regular duties we are often asked to carry resupply and mail to and from the field," says warrant Officer Douglas W. Lackey, III (Knoxville, Tenn.), a pilot. "We also perform medivacs if we are in the area, or if the landing zone is too small for a regular dustoff."

Pearcy, the section commander, recently received the Distinguished Flying Cross when he flew two dustoff missions from and LZ which has suffered a heavy ground attack. He was called at 02:30 in the morning to fly an operations officer into the area and thus was on the scene more quickly than anyone else.

"I was in the area when they said they had some wounded men on the ground," said Pearcy. "I knew they had to get to a hospital quickly so I took them there as fast as I could."

All of the work involved in the brigade aviation section isn't the thrill and glory of flying, however. The ground crew performs maintenance on the helicopters, and each LOH must have one hour of maintenance for every four hours of air time.

The section may be small, but the 198th Aviation Section does a lot of good things for the men on the ground.

These infantrymen with Charlie Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., waste no time in unloading supplies from this UH-1H (Huey) helicopter while operating on Command Post Shirley near Hiep Duc. (U.S. Army Photo by Sp/4 Brad Mandel)

Margaret Markov plays Polly in MGM's "Pretty Maids all in a Row". She was recently named pin-up girl of the year by 850 Royal Marine Commandos who serve in England. We hereby proclaim her our pin up girl of the week, since we have better taste than the English. (Photo courtesy of MGM)

Beware Charlie, Sam recovered

By Cpt. George F. Bennett

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Sam's back in training now. There was a time when it looked like he might not live much less return to the field. Nevertheless, he's back in training now, and should be out with the grunts within a few weeks.

Sam is a 92 pound German Shepard assigned to the 48th Scout Dog Platoon which supports the 196th Infantry Brigade. While on patrol with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, Sam along with his handler became the victim of an enemy booby trap.

As a result of the booby trap Sam suffered shrapnel wounds to both rear legs and his right front shoulder. Extensive muscle damage also resulted. It appeared Sam's career as a scout dog had ended.

But this was not the case. Sam's personality wouldn't permit him to give up. It certainly wouldn't permit the veterinatian to "put him to sleep." Sam's amiability caused everybody to like him.

In fact his friendly disposition aided his recovery. One day while on an inspection tour, Command Sergeant Major Fredrick K. Tracey (Seattle), sergeant Major of the 196th Inf. Bde., noticed and asked about Sam. As a consequence it wasn't unusual to see Sam running the quarter-mile track around the helipad at LZ Hawk Hill. Each night Tracey would run, and there would be Sam. Of course, initially it was hard for Sam to keep up, and he would drop out after a couple of laps. Later there was no problem.

"Once in awhile Sam just wouldn't feel like running," said Tracey. "Sometimes he's just a big phoney and wants a lot of attention."

By being with the sergeant major, Sam received the treatment he needed. He also received the T.L.C. (Tender Loving Care) of all who worked with or near the brigade's "Top Soldier". Sam's residuals included sleeping under an air-conditioned trailer which made life considerably more pleasant.

"When Sam was with the sergeant major he was able to receive the personalized treatment he needed for a rapid recovery," stated Second Lieutenant James Mulford (Chesire, Ohio) 48th Scout Dog Platoon leader. "He received all the medical care he needed and by running with the sergeant major he had much more physical exercise than normally available."

"I was really looking forward to Sam's recovery," continued Mulford. "I'm pretty short of good dogs and Sam's one of the best."

They enemy has had a slight reprieve while Sam's been on convalescent leave. Now that he's back in training, they had better BEWARE. He won't give the enemy the TLC he received once the pursuit resumes.

A cannoneer from Battery A. 3rd Battalion of the 16th Artillery puts the funishing touches on a 155mm howitzer in preparation for a fire mission on landing zone (LZ) West.
(U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Tom Mano)

GI's adopt 4-legged 'VC'

By PFC Larry Rich

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. I0) – If there is ever a competition to determine which unit captured the smallest, furriest, combat hardened Viet Cong, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, will win paws down.

While recently conducting a sweep northwest of Fire Support Base Annette, the "Legionnaires" came upon an enemy bunker complex. Having encountered heavy resistance in the area, the soldiers advanced warily. After calling out to any possible civilians who might have taken refuge in the fortified positions, they threw hand grenades into the bunkers. Then they conducted a thorough search.

"A frag had just exploded in one of the bunkers," Specialist Four William Harris (Selma, Ala.) recalled, "when one of the guys looked in the entrance and said "There's dog down there."

Cautiously entering the bunker, Harris found the only occupant was a small brownish-grey puppy which sat in a corner watching him. Picking the dog up, the soldier carried the 'detainee' over to the tracked vehicles which had accompanied the infantrymen on the mission.

"Except for being hard of hearing," Harris continued," the dog wasn't injured. The bunker had wooden planks set up along the inside of the wall. I figure that the pup must have been partially in the cracks between the boards to escape the frag's shrapnel."

Having lost their company mascot only a few weeks before, the "Legionnaires" were more than glad to adopt the four-legged "enemy".

"We fed him C-rations on the way back to Hawk Hill," Harris said. "He's pretty used to us now, but occasioanlly I'll wake up during the night and find he's pulled a 'sapper attack' and is playfully chewing on my hand."

The men of Company a have a new mascot in their rear area, and he's a combat veteran like themselves. It took them about a minute to name him. They call him "Frag."

GI's retreat from angry bees

By SGT Tom Frey

CHU LAI, (198th Inf. Bde. I0) – Not only does the infantryman have to cope with enemy, booby-traps, and weather, but as one element from the 23rd Infantry Division's 198th Infantry Brigade will tell you, bumblebees are definitely nothing to mess around with.

On a recent mission northwest of Chu Lai, the "Professionals" of Bravo Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, were clearing an LZ (landing zone) for resupply when the unforfunate swing of a machete ripped through a beehive. Immediately the bees sought revenge and headed for the GI's who were assualting their area of operations.

"The bees came in swarms," commented Specialist Four Edward Ross (Binghamton N.Y.), a rifleman. "They were sticking all over our shirts. It was funny, but it hurt like hell."

The men went for cover, hiding in bushes and hiding in foxholes, but when this maneuver proved useless, the only logical solution was to retreat.

"We all ran back to the night defensive position and covered ourselves with poncho liners," said Private First Class Mike McClain (Los Angeles), rifleman. "We tried using bug juice, swatting at them and hiding, but nothing seemed to work!"

Finally realizing they had won this battle, the bees moved back to their home to start rebuilding.

One of the few fortunate "survivors", Private First Class Richard Peck (Lewistown, Pa.), a rifleman, said, "I got completely away from the rest of the men. I played chicken but at least I didn't get stung."

From what these men experienced, it is certain they will "BEE" careful the next time.

123rd Avn Bn awards

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. 10) – The following are awards given to people of the 123d Aviation Battalion. Recently promoted to Chief Warrant Officer were Thomas Root, Thomas Grove and Gilbert Wright.

CW Root, (Mineral Wells, Tex.) will ETS in May and he plans on making Houston, Texas his home. Mr. Root plans to complete his college education and enter into the field of engineering.

CW Grove (Monroe, LA.) will DEROS in mid-April. He has recently submitted his paperwork for an indefinite status and is awaiting his orders.

CW Wright (Tallahassee, Fla.) will DEROS in May. Mr. Wright upon his departure from Vietnam will attend the Aviation Maintenance Officers Course (AMOC) at Fort Eustis, Virginia and upon completion of the school he will be assigned to the 21st Replacement Detachment in Frankfort, Germany.

Lifeguards' job, not an easy one

By SGT Tom Frey

CHU LAI, (198th Inf. Bde. I0) – When a soldier from the 23rd Infantry Division's 198th Infantry Brigade is fortunate enough to get a rear job his worries are generally over, but not so for Specialist Four Robert Hogan (Brookline, Mass.) and Specialist Four Robert Aitken (Durham, N.C.).

Hogan and Aitken are lifeguards at the 198th Brigade refit area and live with danger each day they are on duty. Hogan and Aitken, both Red cross and Army qualified, work together when the beach is open, always maintaining two guards on the job. Normal work hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 each day, except in bad weather.

"Our main purpose is to make sure people don't abuse the swimming rules, but should an occasion arise that someone needs our help, we will be there ready to serve," says Hogan.

The guards stated that swimmers are limited to swim within a 50 meter distance from shore, unless the surf is rough then the limit is 25 meters.

"Most of the guys don't realize how tricky the tide and undercurrent can be," says Aitken.

"When a swimmer is in trouble out past 50 meters, we use a surfboard to reach him," says Hogan. "For danger less than 50 meters from shore, we use the inner-tube and rope method to pull them in."

Since December, when the two men took the lifeguard job, they have saved approximately 10 lives. On a couple soldiers they had to use immediate lifesaving techniques to keep the individuals alive, but most of the time a medevac helicopter or an ambulance is on call to take the victims to the hospital for treatment.

Aitken says of his job, "It gets to be a long day just sitting and watching for something to happen, but when we do perform our job, it is all worthwhile and self-rewarding."

A Huey (UH-lH) helicopter from the 14th Aviation Battalion, 23rd Infantry Division makes a routine resupply mission to an element of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade recently operating southwest of Chu Lai. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Matt Gryta)